

**EASTON, REDDING, REGION 9 JOINT BOARDS OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING**

Wednesday, June 30, 2021 - 7:00 p.m.

Held Remotely Pursuant to Executive Order NO. 7B

Virtual via Zoom – Details Below Virtual via Zoom – Details Below

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/95344600980?pwd=a2JEYm9OakhkR3drUDl1ajZPMXRXdz09>

**Minutes**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Board members:**

Easton: Stinson, Hicks, Parker, Chieda; Absent: Goldstein, Wible

Redding: Parkin, Whaley, Pilato, Hoffman, Oulton, Reilly, Hocker

Region 9: Johnston, Graziano, Berry, D'Agostino, Pampel, Williams, O'Brien; Absent: Denny

Administration: Harrison

Others: 35 members of the staff and public.

**CALL TO ORDER**

C. Parkin called the Redding Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

J. Stinson called the Easton Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

T. Johnston called the Redding Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: CONTRACTS FOR CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS**

C. Parkin clarified that the contract that had been recently approved for Dr. Harrison had not been signed by both parties, so the existing contract signed in August 2020 remains in effect and includes a contractual increase beginning July 1, 2021. J. Stinson reminded the Boards of the work of the Negotiating Committee to normalize and standardize contract terminology across all contracts for the Administration in Central Office, and explained the amendments currently being proposed to the Boards. Discussion followed.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the amended proposed terms for the contract of employment for Dr. Pierson-Ugol, the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, for the two-year period commencing July 1, 2021. (Parker, Cheida). Unanimous, 4-0.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education amend the motion to authorize the Board Chair to sign the document. (Parker, Cheida). Unanimous consent.**

**Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the amended proposed terms for the contract of employment for Dr. Pierson-Ugol, the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, for the two-year period commencing July 1, 2021. (Hoffman, Whaley). Unanimous, 7-0.**

**Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education amend the motion to authorize the Board Chair to sign the document. (Hoffman, Whaley). Unanimous consent.**

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the amended proposed terms for the contract of employment for Dr. Pierson-Ugol, the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, for the two-year period commencing July 1, 2021. (O'Brien, D'Agostino). Unanimous, 7-0.**

**Motion:** move that the Region 9 Board of Education amend the motion to authorize the Board Chair to sign the document. (O'Brien, D'Agostino). Unanimous consent.

**Motion:** move that the Easton Board of Education approve the draft terms for the proposed contract for the Director of Technology and Digital Learning and authorize the Board Chair to sign the document. (Parker, Hicks) Approved. 3-0-1, Cheida abstained.

**Motion:** move that the Redding Board of Education approve the draft terms for the proposed contract for the Director of Technology and Digital Learning and authorize the Board Chair to sign the document. (Hoffman, Reilly) Approved. Unanimous.

**Motion:** move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the draft terms for the proposed contract for the Director of Technology and Digital Learning and authorize the Board Chair to sign the document. (D'Agostino, Williams) Approved. Unanimous.

RECESS TO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS DRAFT CONTRACT FOR THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Recessed at 7:23 p.m.

**Motion:** move that the Easton Board of Education recess to Executive Session to discuss the draft contract for the Director of Finance and Operations. (Parker, Hicks) Approved. Unanimous consent.

**Motion:** move that the Redding Board of Education recess to Executive Session to discuss the draft contract for the Director of Finance and Operations. (Hoffman, Whaley) Approved. Unanimous consent.

**Motion:** move that the Region 9 Board of Education recess to Executive Session to discuss the draft contract for the Director of Finance and Operations. (D'Agostino, Williams) Approved. Unanimous consent.

Redding Board of Education returned from recess at 7:46 p.m.

Easton Board of Education returned from recess at 7:47 p.m.

Region 9 Board of Education returned from recess at 7:47 p.m.

No action taken.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: SUPERINTENDENT VACANCY AND FORMATION OF PERSONNEL SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR SUPERINTENDENT

C. Parkin reminded the Boards of Dr. Harrison's resignation effective 9/23/21 so it is now incumbent upon the Boards to fill that vacancy. He explained the existing agreement with the search consultant, Dr. J. Erardi, provides that a new search could be duplicated at no additional cost should the Boards choose to use Dr. Erardi's services for the new search. Discussion followed.

**Motion:** move that the Easton Board of Education establish the following:

1. A joint Easton, Redding, and Region 9 Boards of Education Personnel Search Committee of the whole, consisting of the membership of the Easton, Redding, and Region 9 Boards of Education and charge the committee with identifying a finalist for the role of Superintendent of Schools. The Personnel Search Committee shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the Board of Education then acting as chairperson of the three boards. The committee shall not be extinguished until a permanent Superintendent of Schools is appointed by the three boards and a contract is fully executed; and

2. A Superintendent Search Steering Committee, to consist of three members of each of the Easton, Redding, and Region 9 Boards of Education. The Chairpersons of the Easton, Redding, and Region 9 Boards of Education shall be members of the Steering Committee ex officio. This Steering Committee shall be considered a subcommittee of the Personnel Search Committee and be empowered to design and implement a process for 1) reviewing resumes; 2) interviewing and screening candidates; and 3) considering and recommending the selection and appointment of an individual on an interim or permanent basis; and shall not be extinguished until a permanent Superintendent of Schools is appointed by the three boards and a contract is fully executed. The Steering Committee may, in compliance with Freedom of Information laws, also solicit bids and propose the hiring of a search consultant to the three boards. The Steering Committee shall be co-chaired by one member from Redding and one from Easton to be selected by the Committee and shall provide regular updates to the Personnel Search Committee. (Hicks, Chieda). Unanimous. Approved, 4-0.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education establish the following:

1. A joint Easton, Redding, and Region 9 Boards of Education Personnel Search Committee of the whole, consisting of the membership of the Easton, Redding, and Region 9 Boards of Education and charge the committee with identifying a finalist for the role of Superintendent of Schools. The Personnel Search Committee shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the Board of Education then acting as chairperson of the three boards. The committee shall not be extinguished until a permanent Superintendent of Schools is appointed by the three boards and a contract is fully executed; and
2. A Superintendent Search Steering Committee, to consist of three members of each of the Easton, Redding, and Region 9 Boards of Education. The Chairpersons of the Easton, Redding, and Region 9 Boards of Education shall be members of the Steering Committee ex officio. This Steering Committee shall be considered a subcommittee of the Personnel Search Committee and be empowered to design and implement a process for 1) reviewing resumes; 2) interviewing and screening candidates; and 3) considering and recommending the selection and appointment of an individual on an interim or permanent basis; and shall not be extinguished until a permanent Superintendent of Schools is appointed by the three boards and a contract is fully executed. The Steering Committee may, in compliance with Freedom of Information laws, also solicit bids and propose the hiring of a search consultant to the three boards. The Steering Committee shall be co-chaired by one member from Redding and one from Easton to be selected by the Committee and shall provide regular updates to the Personnel Search Committee. (Hoffman, Whaley). Unanimous. Approved, 7-0.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education establish the following:

1. A joint Easton, Redding, and Region 9 Boards of Education Personnel Search Committee of the whole, consisting of the membership of the Easton, Redding, and Region 9 Boards of Education and charge the committee with identifying a finalist for the role of Superintendent of Schools. The Personnel Search Committee shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the Board of Education then acting as chairperson of the three boards. The committee shall not be extinguished until a permanent Superintendent of Schools is appointed by the three boards and a contract is fully executed; and
2. A Superintendent Search Steering Committee, to consist of three members of each of the Easton, Redding, and Region 9 Boards of Education. The Chairpersons of the Easton, Redding, and Region 9 Boards of Education shall be members of the Steering Committee ex officio. This Steering Committee shall be considered a subcommittee of the Personnel Search Committee and be empowered to design and implement a process for 1) reviewing resumes; 2) interviewing and screening candidates; and 3) considering and recommending the selection and appointment of an individual on an interim or permanent basis; and shall not be extinguished until a permanent Superintendent of Schools is appointed by the three boards and a contract is fully executed. The Steering Committee may, in compliance with Freedom of Information laws, also solicit bids and propose the hiring of a search consultant to the three boards. The Steering Committee shall be co-chaired by one member from

**Redding and one from Easton to be selected by the Committee and shall provide regular updates to the Personnel Search Committee. (D'Agostino, Pampel). Unanimous. Approved, 7-0.**

C. Parkin discussed the appointment of the members of the Superintendent Search Steering Committee.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dana Benson, Pond Rd, Easton: Thanked Dr. Harrison for his service and explained that he sent the Boards two emails with signatures expressing concerns regarding the data integrity for the DEI survey methodology, and comments and suggestions for the Superintendent Search.

Maureen Hanley, Andrews Rd, Easton: Expressed, that although she had a positive experience at Samuel Staples, she has concerns regarding the curriculum at HKMS and Barlow, and the declining scores, and is considering private school. She encouraged parent representation in the superintendent search and wished Dr. Harrison well.

Ben Oskman, Long Wall Rd, Redding: He read a statement thanking the Boards and Dr. Harrison and expressed concerns regarding the hiring of the new Superintendent, ideology and the tying of DEI initiatives to CRT nationally.

Anne Manusky, Morning Glory, Easton: Wished Dr. Harrison well and expressed concerns about the quality of education of Easton and Redding. She explained that she had removed her kids from the school, but she volunteered to be on the Search Committee. She also hoped that parents would give children the summer off to learn about where they live.

Robert Santagelli, Honeysuckle Hill, Easton: Expressed hopes for the new Superintendent candidate. Explained that CRT brought Dr. Harrison to Easton and ideology brought division and conflict, but he hopes the Boards find a candidate that will represent the ideals that unites us.

Dana Benson, Pond Rd, Easton: Emphasized that CRT is the theory and DEI is the conclusion and practice, and without CRT and Social Justice Theory we would not have the DEI initiative or the survey that is upsetting too many people.

#### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENT**

H. Whaley said we need to end the three board structure as it is untenable, unsustainable and not good for our employees or our students. She apologized to Dr. Harrison for how he has been treated and explained that the DEI work began under Dr. McMorran and it was approved unanimously with one abstention.

C. Hocker suggested to the Boards and public that the hiring of any candidate should not and must not revolve around one particular issue or set of intertwined issues.

C. Pilato assured the public that there is parent representation on the Boards and in the committees.

J. Reilly said that it is urgent to consolidate the Board structure because the current model is not working and not taking action because it is difficult and complex is unfair to our staff. He thanked Dr. Harrison.

C. Parkin reflected upon the DEI discourse on Facebook and in copied and forwarded emails and said we should not take it to represent the entire will of the community. He explained that DEI work started before the districts knew of Dr. Harrison, and that Dr. Harrison was selected because he was the best applicant, but we are losing educational leaders, in part, because the structure crushes leadership under the weight of the structure.

K. O'Brien reminded the Boards that we have heard from leaders for years that the structure is untenable, and that the Boards need to do something about it. She also said she is very sorry for the way Dr. Harrison was treated, including the barrage of FOIA requests because it is unsustainable for the Central Office staff. She also noted that the majority of the DEI related emails received by the Boards were in support of the DEI work.

M. Williams thanked Dr. Harrison and said he was not treated appropriately. She also thanked the other Board Members, and especially the Chairs, and said it has been her privilege to work with them.

M. D'Agostino thanked the Board members, Chairs and Dr. Harrison. He said he is not in alignment with critiques of the structure, but suggested the Boards might function with greater collaboration. He regrets Dr. Harrison's short tenure, but assured the public there has not been an agenda and asked that we put aside divisive language and continue to focus on what is best for the students.

M. Pampel explained that when candidates submitted applications, Dr. Harrison was by far the best and she is sad to see him go.

C. Graziano said she supports Dr. Harrison, DEI and educating our students first and foremost. She asked the public to support the Boards in that regard and to work together to deliver a good sound education in whatever structure the voters put forth. She thanked Dr. Harrison and hoped to work with him again in some form.

J. Cheida said it was unfortunate that we were not going to get to see Dr. Harrison's expertise, and hopes to get his feedback, but thinks there are things the Boards can do right now to improve such as limiting meeting length, planning agendas and no longer having Special Meetings. She apologized for mentioning political parties in terms of the Superintendent Search, and also asked the community to stop the posts and mailers and let the Boards do their work.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion:** Move that the Easton Board of Education by adjourned. (Parker, Stinson). Unanimous consent.

**Motion:** Move that the Redding Board of Education by adjourned. (Hoffman, Whaley) Unanimous consent.

**Motion:** Move that the Region 9 Board of Education by adjourned. (D'Agostino, Graziano) Unanimous consent.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Submitted by Colleen Pilato  
Secretary, Redding Board of Education